Journal of Alpine Research | Revue de géographie alpine

98-1 | 2010
Parcs nationaux de montagne et construction territoriale des processus participatifs

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Electronic version
URL: http://journals.openedition.org/rga/1156
DOI: 10.4000/rga.1156
ISSN: 1760-7426

Publisher
Association pour la diffusion de la recherche alpine

Electronic reference
Stéphane Héritier, « Public Participation and Environmental management in Mountain National Parks », *Revue de Géographie Alpine | Journal of Alpine Research* [Online], 98-1 | 2010, Online since 17 May 2010, connection on 20 April 2019. URL : http://journals.openedition.org/rga/1156 ; DOI : 10.4000/rga.1156

Public Participation and Environmental management in Mountain National Parks:

Anglo-Saxon Perspectives

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Abstract: Public involvement has become a key concept in conservation management worldwide. This paper provides an overview of the situation in four countries where national parks have been established for over a century, and where their creation often involved clearing the land of earlier indigenous settlements. Since the 1970s, public participation has become common practice in park management, even though such participation has taken on a variety of forms. The paper analyses the general trends in public participation in park management practices, participation that most authors consider has contributed to successful governance policies and helped build participative democracy. Analyses at different levels, however, reveal that public participation can also divide stakeholders, making it really difficult for any effective coalition of stakeholders to emerge.

Keywords: park management, stakeholder, governance, Canada, United States of America, Australia, New Zealand

Certain articles of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights of 1948 proclaim the importance of the free and unrestrained participation of the population in the taking of public decisions[1]. Applied more directly to protected areas, these principles support the idea of citizen involvement in the preparation of legislation and the everyday management of protected areas; the latter is expressed in forward planning operations and their implementation. Public participation is also seen, if not used, as a means to limit conflicts and to promote the social acceptance of protection projects (Depraz, 2005; Laslaz, 2005) or activities, namely tourism-related, conducted in protected areas. At the world scale, the involvement of local populations has become one of the major issues in the preparation of

[1] The conditions are related to the freedom of opinion and expression (article 19), the right to peaceful assembly and association (art. 20), the possibility, guaranteed by law, of taking part in the government of one's country, directly or through freely chosen representatives (art 21), while at the same time respecting one's duties to the community (art. 29).

conservation policies, if not development policies. Studies of the decisive role of public participation in reaching decisions concerning the management of protected mountain areas are particularly numerous, giving rise to an abundant literature produced by planners and managers as well as academics (Beltrán, 2000; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2002; Geoghegan & Renard, 2002; Halpenny et al., 2004; Borrini-Feyerabend et al., 2004; Brown et al., 2004; McNeely, 2005; Depraz, 2008; Héritier & Laslaz, 2008).

The question of participation may be examined in terms of two types of development. The first is scientific and follows on from the work of Meister (1977) for whom the role of the participation of citizens, and of individuals in the broad sense of the term, was essential for the social and political development of societies. Joliveau (2001) bases his ideas on the principal meanings of the notion: electoral participation, integration of individuals in formal and informal groups (political parties, associations) and "integration in any decision-making process" (p. 273). He maintains that participation thus links the registers of political action, sociology and management. Participation helps resolve tensions arising from divergent interests between the different stakeholders in a given area. With participation, the question of power and decision-making capacity is clearly posed: Who holds the power of decision? Are we witnessing a veritable readjustment of forces or is participation fragmenting citizen action into numerous different responses to different projects? Brown & Kothari, 2002 consider that the participation of local communities is proving to be decisive for protected areas and "what is new, is the way that, in practice, their role is being accepted, encouraged and, indeed, embraced in very different parts of the world" (p. 4).

The second type of development concerns management. The participation of the local population often appears as a type of governance (Dudley, 2008), meeting the criteria of international organisations, since the change observed at the 3rd World National Parks Congress held in Bali (Indonesia) in 1982. Talbot (1982) summarised this new doctrine by the idea of "protection against men" that would become "protection for men", an orientation which was confirmed with the notion of "adaptative management areas", put forward at the 3rd World Conservation Congress in Bangkok in 2004. In addition, public participation in environmental decisions has generally demonstrated the progress achieved in terms of environmental education, the understanding of environmental issues, and the resolution of conflict (Beierle & Cayford, 2002).

For some thirty years, the governance of protected areas and the procedures for setting up new national parks have endeavoured to get local populations more strongly involved – particularly in those countries born of British colonialism such as Australia[2], Canada[3], the USA and New Zealand, on

[2] In Australia, the political organisation of the country (a Commonwealth grouping together states and territories, each with their own parliament and government, has led to the coexistence of two systems of protected areas. The oldest parks were created by the states (the first, the National Park, renamed Royal National Park, was created in New South Wales in 1879) with their own legislation

which this text focuses. Indeed states and management authorities for protected areas are tending to increasingly take local populations into account, adhering to a doctrine of public participation, inspired by the principles of participative democracy[4] (James & Blamey, 1999). This article attempts to identify the overall trends – beyond the differences existing between these states – concerning participation, its stakes, practices, and results (anticipated or achieved) in the mountain national parks in the major countries of the English-speaking world, characterised by a long history of conservation (cf. dates of the creation of the first national parks, figure 1).

At what scales and at what levels does participation operate? What success has it achieved and what are its limits? What are the options chosen by local actors – managers, associations or local populations – to create or stimulate the conditions for living together? It is not easy for participative practices to develop from past disputes related to the setting up of parks, and collective public decisions remain difficult to reach.

Public participation: a difficult exercise compromised by a legacy of conflict

National parks are generally created by state authorities (national, federal or a member state of a confederation), which allocate a portion of the territory (by acquisition or expropriation) to be granted a protective status guaranteed by the said state with a view to protecting the species, landscapes or resources contained within (cf. definition proposed in Héritier & Laslaz, dir., 2008, p. 14-15). The protected areas selected for this study are examined with a view to identifying the main forms of public participation in mountain national parks and to conducting a critical analysis of them.

Situations with disputes not entirely settled

The discovery of a natural environment different from that hitherto known to pioneer settlers helped foster the development of wilderness philosophies, adopted to varying degrees by the four countries concerned (Dunlap, 1999). In the United States, the transcendentalist movement, under the impetus of R.W. Emerson and particularly H.D. Thoreau, had the effect, from the 19th century onwards, of

and full authority over their parks. The Australian government began creating parks later (Kakadu, in 1979).

3 In Canada, the 42 National Parks of Canada come under the federal government while 22 national parks in Quebec are managed by the Society of outdoor recreation establishments of Quebec (SEPAQ - Société des établissements de plein air du Québec).

4 The question raised here does not concern the legitimacy of participative democracy but its application in protected areas. L. Blondiaux (2007) makes a plea for participative democracy while at the same time pointing out its limits.

adding flesh to the bones of a fledgling perception of Nature (Nash, 1982). Everywhere, Nature was considered a playground for the Anglo-Saxons, particularly those living in the towns, and as a reservoir of resources (Mosley, 1992; Dunlap, 1999). This perception was even used to justify the marginalisation of those nations that existed before colonisation (for convenience, we will use the term indigenous peoples[5]) and to dispossess them of their lands. This was the case in British Columbia (Harris, 2002) and Australia, two regions of the world where the doctrine of terra nullius, which contested the very principle of indigenous peoples having any sovereignty before the arrival of the British, was applied and served to justify their plundering (Pratt, 2004). In the USA, as in Canada, the eviction of native populations from their lands, which went on over centuries, was sometimes gradual, as in Banff (Binnema & Niemi, 2006), but often violent and conducted by the army, as was the case in Yellowstone and Yosemite, to cite but two examples (Kemf, 1993; Sellars, 1997; Hodgins & Cannon, 1998; Keller & Turek, 1998; Spence, 1999; Beaulieu, 2006). Even when civil rights policies were more egalitarian (in legal terms, the Maoris of New Zealand and the Europeans have had equal civil rights since the Treaty of Waitangi in 1840[6]), the indigenous populations were marginalised both economically and socially (Orange, 1997). But the question of public participation is much more far-reaching and involves all the populations concerned by residence, property ownership, the use of space, tourism practices, and even management choices with respect to protected areas.

The historical context has weighed heavily on the conditions governing the creation of national parks in the Anglo-Saxon countries and they all appear to have one point in common, that is the almost systematic exclusion of local populations in the areas concerned (of the four countries studied, New Zealand represents is an exception since the Tongariro National Park was established in 1887 from a sacred area (about 2640 ha) offered by Te Heuheu Tukino IV (Horonuku), the chief of Ngāti Tūwharetoa, to the Crown: Gift Area. The history of conservation shows that the creation of national parks, regardless of the political regimes or the

5 Fully conscious of the problems raised by the vocabulary in this field, no term used (whether it be Indigenous – etymologically, of this land, but also having pejorative connotations in French – Native, First People) is totally satisfactory and generally accepted; it remains unsuitable from an historical viewpoint since the Maoris conquered the country from the 11th century. Consequently, we have made a practical choice by using the term Indigenous people to refer to all the peoples whose ascendants occupied the land before European colonisation. Furthermore, in the specific case of Canada, the term Indigenous people is used to refer, according to the country's constitutional law (established in 1982), to the "First Nations, Métis and Inuit". However, in Australia the terms Aboriginal People or Aborigines are generally preferred by those concerned, while in New Zealand the term Maori (or Iwi) is preferred. In the United States, the preference is First Nation, while for Canada, the term Aboriginal People(s) is used in the English version of the Constitution Act of 1982.

6 The Treaty of Waitangi has also been the cause of a political and property conflict over the terms of the treaty and their translation in the Maori language. Through the treaty, the Maoris effectively gave up a right of kawanatanga (governance) over their lands, while the English version spoke of giving up sovereignty over these lands (I would like to thank the reviewers of this text for the precision of detail in this note).

continents irrespective of political regime or continent, has often been accompanied by measures to exclude local populations to the benefit of actors intervening at other levels (Alcorn, 1993; Sellars, 1997; Mitchell et al., 2002; Brockington & Igoe, 2006; Guyot, 2006; Depraz, 2008). At the regional level, for example, the demands for the creation of national parks made to federal departments by regional elected officials or conservation associations provide ample illustration (New South Wales, 2000; Hall et Page, 2002; Sandlos, 2005). At the national and international level, the mobilisation of nature protection associations, which often enjoyed privileged government contacts, directly contributed to the creation of national parks. It also enabled the preparation of international treaties (for example, the Migratory Birds Treaty signed in 1917 between the USA and Canada) and national regulations. Developments over the past three decades – mainly thanks to legal amendments and the international recognition of numerous indigenous rights – have radically transformed the position of certain stakeholders in the power struggles that take place around national parks, and have contributed more generally to the "indigenous awakening" (to use the expression coined by De Varennes, 1996).

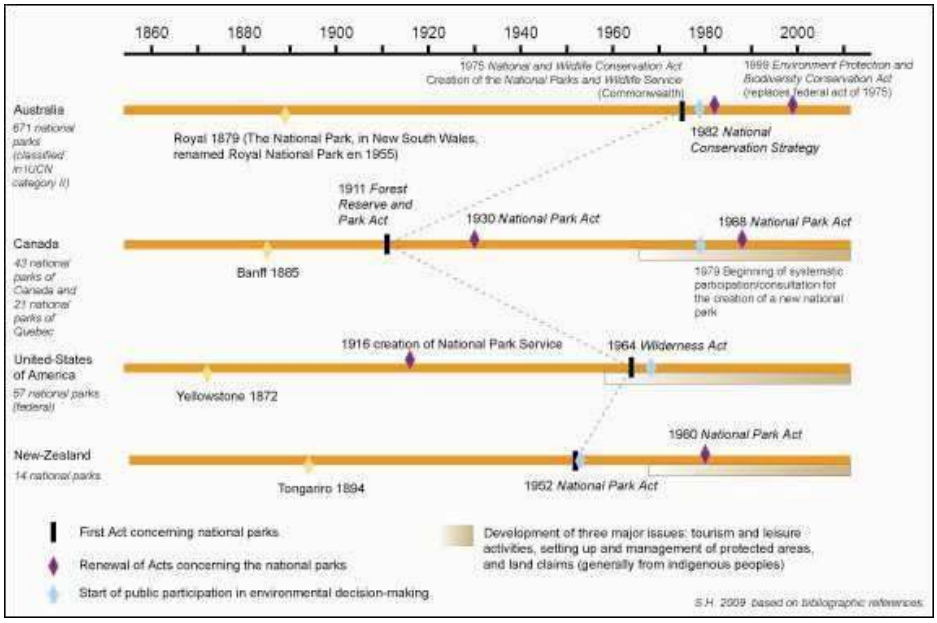

Figure 1. Old parks, recent public participation

Briefly, the exclusion of local populations from numerous protected areas has led to situations of conflict and dispute, thereby increasing opposition to the objectives of protection and, consequently, depriving park managers of the

ecological know-how of the residents[7] (Danby et al., 2003), considered by some authors as essential to ensure the sound management of these areas (Berkes, 1999).

The stakeholders

Public participation in national parks concerns a wide range of people. Managers and management documents in the countries discussed in this article generally use two terms. The first, stakeholder, refers to all the individuals or groups concerned by a measure decided by an organisation (public or private). Stakeholders are considered as partners in discussions and negotiations and organisations consider that they must work with them in order to get projects accepted. The term stakeholder is common to a general doctrine that aims to take into consideration a population in order to get an idea accepted and, if required, to adjust the proposal to meet the demands or grievances expressed by this population. It is part of a top-down process but is presented as a bottom-up approach, characterised by the taking into consideration of the proposals of individuals or groups concerned by a project. In terms of scale, the stakeholders are not necessarily close to one another (figure 2).

The second term often encountered is shareholders, generally used to refer to those who hold shares in a company. In the context of the sociology of organisations, they correspond to individuals who share real decision-making power within the organisation or organisational structure[8]. Although both stakeholders and shareholders are involved in the participation process, the former are consulted before the decision is taken (consultation allows opinions to be heard, but without there being any real obligation to take them into account) while the latter actually participate in the decision-making. The involvement of stakeholders was also the result of a desire to reduce the cost of public policies in the 1980s and 1990s in the four countries covered by this study (USA, New Zealand, Australia (Hall, 1999) and Canada). The fact that the public authorities took less responsibility for certain activities (management of protected areas, tourism, etc.) led to part of the decision-making process becoming more "diluted", requiring lengthy preparations[9] and the taking into account of various partners (or stakeholders), the most influential of which remained decisive in the taking of the final decision. These were often business interest groups capable of presenting

7 "From the perspective of knowledge as science offered here, the physical and cultural displacement of aboriginal peoples in the St Elias region is of particular note since it also represents a significant loss of information" (Danby et al., 2003: 199)

8 For example, a family with a commercial lease in a national park may be considered as a stakeholder in a project to develop tourism and hospitality facilities, even though they might not participate in the final decision or have any real influence on decision-making.

9 But preparations are no longer supported by public finances.

their economic interests as stemming from general public interest or of orienting political priorities according to their own interests (Hall, 1999)[10].
Currently, the stakeholders (figure 2) in the mountain national parks comprise the following:
- internal institutional actors (managers of parks or towns and visitor reception centres within the parks)
- communities living in the surrounding areas
- private actors (of variable size)
- associations or other environmental organisation (NGOs)
- private stakeholders: individuals, families, professional groups
- local populations (indigenous or non-indigenous[11]), actually resident in the place and having a real link with it, but also those populations that claim usage rights or property rights over the whole or part of the protected area (Berg et al., 1993)
- tourists who may be consulted through in situ or ex situ surveys (regional or national telephone surveys).

It is well to point out that the groups involved in participation procedures are not necessarily homogenous. For example, local populations are divided into two distinct groups, in figure 2 (local populations and delocalised local populations), according to their proximity to the protected area. However, these groups are particularly heterogeneous and characterised by competitiveness or tensions that vary over time. For example, interviews conducted with members and representatives of the Siksika First Nation revealed a quarrel regarding legitimacy – a situation common to numerous parks in the four countries – which brought them into opposition with the Stoney Nation. These two nations have historically used the park area, have named places in their respective languages and both claim anteriority and even special usage rights. Moreover, even local economic actors do not necessarily form a more homogenous group. Although they generally join each other in opposing or getting round the decisions of the management organisation when it attempts to reinforce regulations, they may also enter into competition with one another when their own interests warrant it, without taking into consideration the fact that they do not all have the same lobbying powers.

[10] Apart from the situations encountered in the field by numerous geographers, Hall (1999) develops an argument that is both convincing and well referenced. He adds that for Australia, "Craik (1990) clearly demonstrated that the key industry association was able to influence government policy deliberation in a manner which met their specific interests" (Hall, 1999: 282). A similar situation was observed by the author in the Kosciuszko National Park (New South Wales) where tourism development (in the two main ski resorts within the park, Thredbo and Perisher) is still a very sensitive issue in 2010.
[11] To use the terminology of the UICN (also open to discussion).

Participation and management of mountain national parks: a difficult balance

Consultation corresponds to a certain extent to a form of participation in which the involvement of local populations remains relatively modest and has a variable impact, the final decision generally remaining with the park management services.

Public participation methods and implementation by actors

Some thirty methods of participation have been identified by Pimbert & Pretty (1997). These different approaches remain strongly linked with the civil society that they address. The methods of participation and their conditions of application are largely defined by the ways in which democracy is exercised in general and, more specifically, in the context of decisions concerning protected areas. For participation to be effective, it must meet specific needs when public decision-making, hitherto conducted without consultation, and the practices of the managers of public areas are no longer seen as reflecting society's wishes or aspirations. This approach has already existed for some thirty years in Australia and in Canada where the federal agency responsible for managing existing parks and creating new ones prepared a public consultation procedure in 1979 to precede the establishment of new parks[12]. The aim of this consultation process was to promote the creation of parks and to limit tensions such as those that followed the forced expropriations associated with the creation of Forillon national park[13] in Quebec's Gaspé peninsular. In 1979, Parks Canada, a federal agency, thus introduced a special negotiation procedure and a participation protocol to precede the creation of every new national park. Today the procedure is regularly applied and comprises several stages that generally follow a precise schedule in which all the stakeholders can be consulted directly or are given the opportunity to express their opinions on the project.

- Participation in the context of national parks may vary considerably, depending on the moment and the situation. However, the following major trends may be identified, starting with the most modest level of involvement:

[12] BILL R.E. 1987, Attempts to establish national parks in Canada. University of Carleton (p. 137 et 143) cited by Hamel-Dufour, to be published, "Un territoire, deux visions : les retombées d'un processus de participation publique sur les relations entre Parcs Canada et les communautés de la Minganie", in Laslaz L. et al., 2010: Espaces protégés et territoires. Conflits et acceptation, Belin, coll. Mappemonde (forthcoming publication).

[13] In Canada, the difficulties encountered during the creation of the Forillon National Park (1974) led to violent reaction from local people protesting against the expropriations deemed necessary for the creation of the park. The refusal of fishermen to leave their homes and the intervention of the police reflected a sort of crisis over the legitimacy of public action.

- Participation in public surveys conducted among visitors (residents and non-residents): surveys/questionnaires relating to environmental and tourism management in Denali, Yosemite and Yellowstone (Lavigne, 2002 ; White, 2007).
- Participation in consultations and public meetings (for example, in Banff where a major study on the Bow valley enabled numerous local actors to participate in the preparation of an environmental report on the park, Banff-Bow Valley Study, 1996).
- Participation in working groups on various subjects (cultural actions).
- Participation in round table discussions (Banff).
- Participation in major discussions on management principles and desirable management orientations (particularly on hunting regulations).
- Regular official participation on advisory committees and management boards.
- Lastly, a special form of participation involves employment encouraging the integration of the members of local communities in the management organisation (but in this case, what happens to freedom of speech within the administrative systems which have a strong control over discourses and the principles of communication?)

Even when special procedures are put in place, there are always tensions surrounding the creation of a new national park and negotiations are often strained with the local communities, which are unwilling to unconditionally accept new developments: "The presence of parks also creates new demands on local resources, which in turn affect park conservation objectives" (Fortin & Gagnon, 1999 : 201).

The stakes of participation: lip service to an ideal or the meaningful inclusion of local populations

The meaning of participation for stakeholders varies according to the parks concerned. In those parks created from the 1980s onwards, the rules of participation have been fixed and known, and are applied as soon as the park creation process is set in motion. However, for the older parks (often created in mountain regions at the time when tourism for the socio-economic elite was rapidly expanding in the 19th century) participation was as much concerned with development projects for the protected area as with demands concerning usage, property disputes or the desire to improve the integration of indigenous peoples in public decisions[14].

The stakes of participation may be summarised in one word: democracy, or, more exactly, how to incorporate all the components of society in practising

[14] A report on the Tongariro National Park (New Zealand) indicates that "Discussions with iwi [Maori] note the need for a partnership approach to the management system, and acknowledgment of the roles and responsibilities of tangata whenua [people of the land] as kaitiaki (guardians). By statute, Ngati Tuwharetoa [Maori Tribe in Turangi/taupo area] has a permanent position on the Tongariro/Taupo Conservation Board » (Blaschke & Whitney, 2007, 29).

democracy. This involves all the stakeholders in the various stages of discussion, preparation and decision-making, which in the present case relates to the management of a protected area. In the field of participation, actions give rise to a rather vague vocabulary that includes collaboration, cooperation, and co-management (with or without a hyphen). Sometimes the terms of collaborative management or cooperative management are also employed without necessarily referring to clearly established real situations (O'Donnell, 1995). Another term used is adaptive management, which is supposed to express, among other things, the adaptability of public decision-making under the influence of collective reflection. Generally, collaboration can take place in the context of one-off projects or actions such as measures concerning interpretation (indigenous people as interpretative guides) or the preparation of visitor interpretation panels (ethno-botanical information panels in Waterton Lakes National Park, ethno-landscape panels in Kosciuszko National Park). Cooperation most often concerns more sustainable actions, and in particular pluri-annual projects relating to wildlife management or the impact of wildlife movements in the areas peripheral to the park (phenomena observed for Yellowstone, Jasper, Banff, Kootenay, Tongariro, Yosemite). With both these types of participation, the involvement of local populations or tourists is clearly identified as being outside the decision-making process; they may participate in preparing projects or giving their opinions, but they are not involved in drawing up the terms of the final decision, which remains entirely in the hands of the management authorities, responsible in turn to their respective parliaments[15].

The application of theories of participatory democracy to environmental questions and national parks in Australia has made it possible to identify a "participation gradient" based on the level of public involvement observed. Thus James and Blarney have proposed a typology based on seven levels of participation (James & Blamey, 1999), within which it is possible to distinguish a so-called top-down approach (categories 1 and 2) from a more integrative one (categories 3 to 7):

1- Passive participation (in fact, an absence of any real participation since the State decides what is to be done, without consulting its citizens);
2- Participation in information-giving (in other words, the citizens are not really involved);
3- Participation by consultation;
4- Participation for material incentives (participants provide resources e.g. seasonal or permanent employment);
5- Functional participation (participation of stakeholders in different projects);
6- Interactive participation (when stakeholders participate in actions that carry on after the initial project has been completed);

[15] The agencies that manage the parks are responsible to the parliaments of the different states or the federal parliament (namely with regard to financing and management).

7- Self-mobilisation (stakeholders outside normal management authorities take the initiative in a project).

Some actors working on questions of tourism and ecotourism in Australia have suggested going beyond this conception, defending the idea of "hybridized management" (Wearing & Huyskens, 2001). This links the joint management of parks and indigenous groups with the principles of ecotourism, authorising their real involvement[16] in the definition of management modes.

It thus appears essential to consider the position occupied by stakeholders – everyone concerned by park residence issues, property ownership, the use of space and tourism practices, or even management choices in relation to the park – in the participation landscape. Figure 2 shows the distribution of stakeholders according to the different scales to which they belong (in order) and a hierarchy of powers corresponding to their decision-making capacity or relative influence (along the x-axis).

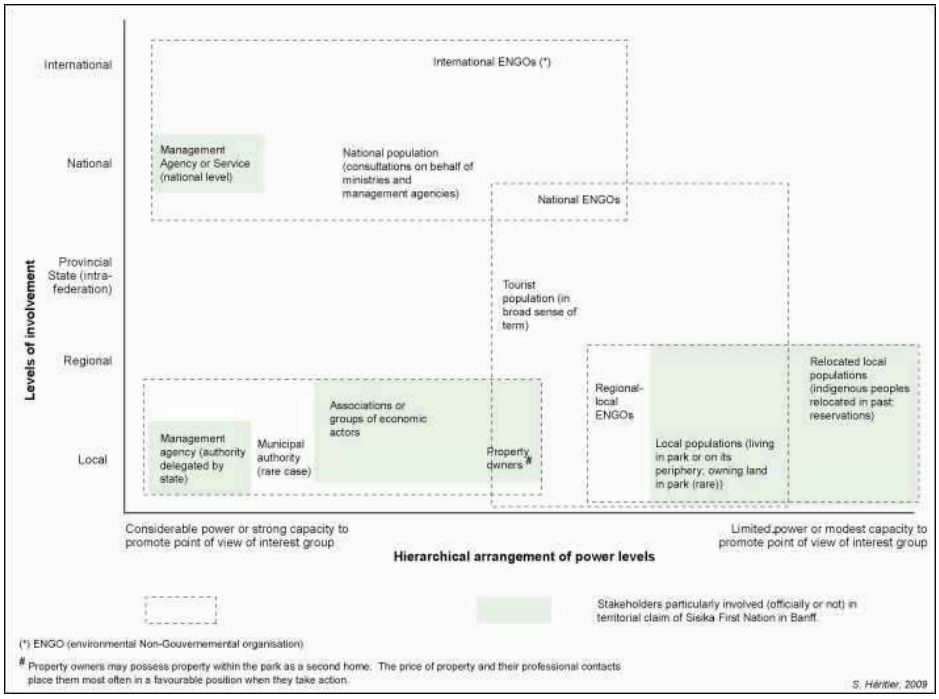

Figure 2 – Level at which stakeholders are taken into consideration. Theoretical approach and application to Banff National Park

This figure enables a correlation to be made between scales of involvement and the hierarchical organisation of power. The general arrangement

[16] In the sense, here, of empowerment.

makes it possible to identify the standard configurations of actors' roles, related to the proximity of levels of involvement (indicated by boxes in dashed lines). However, these relations are not necessarily stable and they change in function of the questions being debated. Thus, represented in green, the stakeholders concerned by the claims of the Siksika First Nation in Banff are illustrative of a sort of fragmentation of the participation landscape. The Siksika First Nation is one of the numerous First Nations claiming traditional usage rights within Banff National Park. They are also claiming property rights for an area of about 43 km² within the park (or 0.65 % of the park's total area). The figure suggests that the vertical hierarchies of power (or of domination), particularly bottom-up, are not easily expressed, especially as there exists a sort of weighting– or regulation – exercised by the courts (they enable the recognition of certain rights following long procedures that tend to dilute agreement at the local level). This situation makes it easier to understand the difficulty of defining a truly shared management process.

Is co-management possible?

Can co-management in the true sense of the term really exist if those who participate on management boards or committees have no more than a consultative role? Canada and the USA are similar in this respect in that the US federal service (the National Park Service) and the Parks Canada have the final responsibility in management decisions, mainly because the federal parks are the property of the federal State[17]. The remarks made earlier concerning the vocabulary used by the state services and agencies responsible for parks help illustrate the complexity of the situation: Do the syntagms cooperative/collaborative management, joint management, co-management[18] correspond to a practical reality that makes it possible to perceive a change in the governance of protected areas as well as a change in the relationship and distribution of power (mainly according to the subjects addressed) between the actors present (in short, a change in the governance of protected areas)? Or is it simply a question of nebulous semantics concealing old relationships of power and domination between partners that are obviously unequal in terms of how they can exert pressure and influence public decisions on protection?

Certain authors believe that there is a considerable bias in this respect. According to them, the maintenance of cultural hegemony is perpetuated in every management partnership related to a national park, mainly because these parks and their regulations were established according to the rules of the dominant culture (Wearing & Huyskens, 2001: 283). This argument was borne out in an interview

17 In Canada, the Federal Government must own all of the land in a national park. In the United States, although there are private enclaves with inholders (land owners who were there before the creation of the parks), the National Park Service also has control of land in the parks.

18 For a summary of these terms, see Héritier in Héritier & Laslaz, 2008: 279-280; on the notion of co-management, see Notzke, 1995.

conducted by the author in Banff National Park with two representatives of the Siksika Nation. Since 1982, their claim has concerned a part of the territory that was attributed to them as compensation for the loss of territorial usage rights obtained when the Treaty was signed with the Canadian government in 1877 (before the creation of the park). A clause gave them timber rights. The allocation of this plot of land has never been honoured and the Siksika brought a lawsuit against Parks Canada in 2000. The situation remained complex and tense between the stakeholders who drew up an agreement (non-public) in 2006. In 2009, the situation was still unresolved. The length of procedures, started in 1982, clearly indicates that it has remained difficult to find a situation where the stakeholders are truly equal partners.

This case study should not conceal the fact that there has nevertheless been a real change[19] in the way that relations between park management organisations and local populations concerning the development of economic activity and tourism are now considered, particularly in the parks created in the 1990s (Fortin & Gagnon, 1999 ; McCleave et al., 2006).

Conclusion: A critical view of public participation in environmental management

Initiatives to improve the participation of local populations in the management of mountain national parks seem, on paper, to be enjoying much more support than thirty years ago. However, a comparison of conceptualisations of public participation (as presented in the scientific studies or documents produced by managers) with actual implementation and its effects in the field (mainly in Canada and the USA) is somewhat perplexing. Even if this short article does not allow a clear conclusion to be reached, it would appear useful to distinguish between participation practices, their effects with regard to management, and their influence on decisions. Practices are regulated and guaranteed by law or by state constitutional changes. The effects with regard to management remain particularly limited in the old parks in that usage claims and property disputes have led to considerable tensions with the management organisations. In addition, the effects on decisions vary widely and it is difficult to generalise because of reasons linked to the pace of change in political practices in the states concerned and more especially for reasons linked to the inertia of the bureaucracies (public as well as private) responsible for managing the national parks in general, and parks in mountain regions in particular. This somewhat qualified conclusion should not conceal the fact that there has been considerable change over the past three decades and that local populations now have the means to make themselves heard, even if their

[19] In 1992, D. Mercer wrote: "Numerous state government agencies are involved in management […] but typically, in the States concerned, the following government departments play a prominent role: […] Coordination […] varies from "reasonable" to "virtually non-existent" (Mercer, 1992: 296)

views are not always listened to and acted on with as much force as the views of other economic actors.

If participation conditions are examined closely, it would appear that even though numerous different levels (referred to in figure 2) are concerned by the issue of participation, their views and opinions are not all solicited in a systematic and homogenous way. Through the diversity of the cases presented (ski resort development projects, commercial developments, highway projects, or projects affecting tourism practices, such as the introduction of shuttle services to access certain "fragile" tourist sites), figure 2 provides valuable insights into the variety of alliances that develop between parties involved in negotiations, the emergence of tacit agreements, and the tensions, confrontations and competition between partners at the same level. From this perspective, participation opens up a particularly stimulating field for the application of democracy, but in no way does this eliminate the possibility of a particularly powerful actor or group of actors influencing projects in a decisive manner. In the latter case, it becomes extremely difficult to organise a protest or to contest one of the actors in particular. Division of the forces present, allowed by the doctrine of (participative) governance of protected areas, plays – under the pretext of public involvement, or even the establishment of procedures of deliberative democracy – a very different role since it breaks up the stakeholders into a galaxy of groups, themselves torn internally by private, economic and ideological tensions.

Translation: Brian Keogh

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